

5.2 Progress Report on Five Year Plan

The City of Chandler Housing and Redevelopment Division has worked toward achieving the goals outlined in the Five Year Plan. Staff and Council/Public Housing Authority Commission have embraced the challenging steps involved in working toward promoting affordable housing, creating opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and the availability of an affordable living environment free from discrimination.

Progress towards each goal in the 5-year plan ending 2014

Goal One: Assist the availability of affordable, decent, safe and affordable housing.

Since the late 1990's and through the early 2000's the City of Chandler, Housing Division applied for Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) when the opportunity arose. While the opportunities to increase our Voucher count have not existed in a long time, the Housing Division has managed to utilize 100 percent of the vouchers HUD has allocated to Chandler during this period. In an economic environment that has dealt with HUD reductions in funding for Housing Choice Voucher Program the families served count and been steady. Chandler's Housing Choice Voucher program has consistently managed our Section 8 budget to assure that Chandler has the best chance to utilize all 486 Housing Choice Vouchers. Over the last five-years Chandler has added six-vouchers to our Voucher count.

The vacancy rate for Public Housing continued to remain steady, with only approximately a 2% vacancy rate over the preceding annual term. Significant improvement in the vacancy rate is difficult to achieve, due to the migratory nature of the low-income population that we serve. Staff continues to monitor this area daily to fill turn units around and fill vacancies as quickly as possible. This year staff has improved unit turnaround times by 10 percent.

Over the past five-years the City of Chandler acquired three (3) 2-bedroom unit condos as part of our non-federally subsidized homes. These units are in HOA communities and will be rented at below market rents that will be affordable to families that make between 50%- 80% of area medium income. They are currently providing a new nonfederal income stream for our Division.

The Housing Division also owns two Townhomes that were acquired with HOME funds. The two and three bedroom units will supply additional affordable housing for families that earn less than 80% of area medium income for 15 years.

The Housing Division recently acquired a vacant residential lot and is in the process of building a new affordable rental duplex that will assist two additional families with affordable housing. This project is anticipated to be completed by January of 2016.

We are a high performing Housing Authority in both the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and the Low Rent Public Housing Program and have been so for the past 5 years.

Goal Two: Improve community quality of life and economic vitality.

At the time of the publication of this report, the City of Chandler, Housing and Redevelopment Division was recognized as a High Performing Housing Authority with a PHAS score of 93 in Public Housing. With the exception of 2004 and the initial year of an advisory assessment, the Authority has been high performing. The current SEMAP score provided the Authority a High Performer Status with an overall score of 104%. Again, except for the first year of the plan the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is rated as a High Performer.

In the last five-years, ending FY 2014, the City of Chandler has invested considerable time and resources in training staff to become knowledgeable in the new methods necessary to promote a good work environment for employee that will ultimately benefit the customer. The Authority continues to upgrade our Housing Software systems and is working to refine and improve our Web Page that was launched in 2008. The subscription use and links to “Go Section.com” has been a new tool that has been a significant asset to staff, the public and other housing entities.

The Housing Authority operates in a fiscally prudent manner. The City of Chandler General Fund contributes \$135,000 in annual ongoing funding, to support and help shore up the HUD Public Housing shortfall in subsidy. This action helps stabilize our administrative financial picture. Staff has also been successful in getting and implementing CDBG grants for both the Capital Program and the Housing Youth program. These grant funds augment and improve both our Housing stock and service offerings for our Public Housing Youth Program.

Management staff is keeping an eye towards diversifying financial interests in our HUD portfolio. Tax Credit projects may play a role in transforming the Housing Authority’s revenue stream in the future.

Staff will continue to work towards expanding the availability and improving the overall quality of the affordable housing stock by continuing to modernize public housing and supporting efforts to improve the overall quality of the general housing stock. In 2014, the Housing Authority was successful in keeping our elderly Kingston Arms Apartments designated for the elderly. We also continue to upgrade fencing and landscaping at our sites, which adds both to security and curb appeal of our housing products.

Chandler has expanded the housing programs stock through the creation of housing location maps, landlord outreach and by consistently monitoring the payment standard for the section 8 program.

We also work closely with nonprofit homeownership programs and our Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program to create Individual Development Account opportunities and FSS Escrow accounts to provide both financial and education support to prospective new homeowners.

Through the upgrades and exterior improvements made to the public housing units the tenants have a renewed respect for the developments. Lighting improvements, fencing improvements and new landscaping have increased the overall security and look of each development. Our flat rent program encourages higher income residents to stay or join the public housing program. Our partnership with the Chandler Police department also

provides a direct link to their resources to help screen all tenants and to address and mitigate problems as they arise. The resident council has also become attuned to making suggestions on improving the housing living environment in conjunction with the resident beautification participants.

Goal Three: Promote self-sufficiency and asset development of families and individuals.

The Housing Authority has annually applies for and received a Public Housing/Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator grant since FY 2011. This program strengthens our existing Section 8 and Pubic housing programs and provides additional links to accredited higher education and job training skills.

Most discretionary policies and programs are created to promote self-sufficiency of tenants through a system of comprehensive supportive programs. Staff works to assist housing residents that need assistance by matching resources to promote tenant education and self-sufficiency. Our principle mission is “affordable decent, safe, and sanitary housing” in conjunction with meeting HUD rules and policies augmented with preferential local controls. We support this mission through other social service/educational programs, which include the Family Investment Center, Youth Recreation Program, the Capital Improvement Program and Social Service partnerships with other social service providers.

We have set systems in place to maintain a high voucher utilization rate and plan to work within the HUD guidelines to maximize the utilization of the section 8 vouchers and/or budget. Maintaining our utilization rate will continue to be a challenge in 2014 as we work to maintain our ability to service those in need with the peculiar demands of managing varying cost within a budget based system of funding. In 2014 the Chandler Housing Division is cautiously optimistic in our outlook for our next HUD budget allocation.

Goal Four: Ensure Equal Opportunity in Housing for all Americans.

In 2014, the Housing Authority purged the Public Housing and Section 8 waiting list for the first time in 2 ½ years. The waiting list for Public Housing continued to be open during 2014. When we open waiting lists, the information is published the Arizona Republic (English) and in a Spanish newspaper. Large portions of our clientele primarily speak Spanish and staff wants to reach out to this community. Many of our forms and publication are available in English and Spanish. Our Web Page has a language translator build into the web page that allows for translation of documents in multiple languages. The Public Housing waiting list for low-rent housing continues to be a resource for potential residents. As mentioned earlier, Chandler Housing Authority has an elderly designated apartment complex. This assures that the elderly have a living environment that is suitable and sustainable for their specialized needs. In 2008 we expanded our senior housing options by operating a 4-unit scattered site senior program that complements or existing public housing program. The new Scattered Site Senior Housing program caters to a senior population that makes just under the 80% of area median income. This program is based on an annual flat affordable rent that is not subsidized by HUD.